



CROWN OFFICE
& PROCURATOR
FISCAL SERVICE

SCOTLAND'S PROSECUTION SERVICE

Resources committee minutes

29 July 2021 meeting, held via Microsoft Teams

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Present

Members

- Lindsey Miller, Deputy Crown Agent (Operational Support) (Chair)
- Ian Walford, Deputy Chief Executive
- Graham Kerr, Head of Business Management (Local Court)
- Jonathan Shebioba, Director of Support Services
- John Cooper, Non-Executive Director
- Sarah Carter, HR Director
- Doreen Crawford, Head of Workforce Planning and Reward
- Marlene Anderson, (Interim) Director of Finance and Procurement
- Sharon Davies, Head of Management Accounting and Planning
- Gavin Anderson, Deputy Head of Business Management & Pathology Programme Manager

In attendance

- John MacFarlane, Head of Business Support Services
- Trevor Davidson, Secretariat

Apologies

- Thomas Lindie, Head of Business Management (Serious Casework)
- Elaine Hales, Head of Business Management (Business Services)

Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting was being conducted via MS Teams due to the current Coronavirus outbreak.

Minutes from meeting held on 30 June 2021

The Committee confirmed that the minutes were an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Action Log

The Committee agreed the following amendments to the Action Log and noted progress with the remaining actions.

Action 3 would be continued and action 4 was closed

Finance Update

The Director of Finance and Procurement (DoFP) provided an overview of the finance paper.

The DoFP provided a brief update on the annual accounts, confirming that the current results were as expected. The DoFP advised that they have been involved with budget discussions with Scottish Government and will keep the Committee advise with the outcomes.

The DoFP provided an overview of the Finance update for 2021-22 noting that the first forecast is now in line with a predicted overspend.

The DoFP noted that the Service was pressing ahead with recruitment of budgeted posts and that HR have now applied pay coherence and the new pay policy to June salaries. It was also noted that there was a separate section to discuss Locla Court resourcing later in this meeting.

Risks were noted regarding ISD licensing & maintenance costs, post-mortems, witness costs and non-recoverable VAT. COPFS would also monitor any additional costs incurred during COP26 to confirm if additional funding is required.

The DoFP provided an update on the current overtime spend, and highlighted that LC is forecasted to have an overspend. The Head of Business Management (Local Court) (HoBMLC) stated that additional costs were incurred due to a new judicial requirement, stating that custody cases are now required to take place on bank holiday Mondays. Cases should be dealt with within 48 hours, and the cases are not to be heard on weekends. It was also highlighted that the overtime costs to date were not for Court Recovery, which are expected to start in September.

The DOFP provided an update in the Court Recovery Programme and advised that the breakdown would be allocated to the functions by the end of July.

The DOFP advised that they met the new Counter-Fraud Officer along with the Deputy Chief Executive, who advised that they are planning to set up forums to share best practice and templates/tools.

DOFP concluded by providing an overview of the 2021 Spending review, which included information on the initial work on a high level 5 year funding plan, and set out the limitations and assumption.

The Committee discussed the current issues with the current recruitment campaigns. All were in agreement that Business Areas needed to ensure that staff were assigned the correct level of work.

[ACTION] Non-Executive Director (NXD), asked HoBMLC to submit a paper to the Executive Board regarding the increase in overtime due to the public holiday custody courts.

Head of Management Accounting and Planning (HMAP) discussed the recovery programme budget update, which included an option for an alternative FTE for Local Court (A separate paper which was discussed later in the meeting) and requested if one vacancy factor should be used for all business areas or if separate vacancy factors should be used as each area has their own unique challenges.

It was agreed later in the meeting that the budget should be used which does not include additional FTE for LC (At this time), and separate vacancy factors should be used for each business area.

Local Court Resourcing

HoBMLC asked to present their paper before agreeing the court recovery budgets, which the Committee agreed to.

HOBMLC presented the Local Court FTE and Recovery Post paper and requested for additional recruitment to be permitted to increase their FTE by 78 to the original staffing levels.

The Committee noted the contents and highlighted that COPFS had not yet fully recruited the Court Recovery positions which may assist with the current issues. The Committee were supportive that all business areas should be adequately staffed, but asked the HoBMLC to resubmit their paper, breaking down 78FTE into essential and non-essential positions so the request could be taken further.

HoBMLC confirmed that they would revert to Local Court Senior Management to discuss the situation further and would revert to the Committee if there was still a requirement for these positions.

Recruitment Update (WPG)

Deputy Chief Executive (DCE) was due to provide a verbal update on recruitment, however the previous discussions covered the prepared update.

Provision of duplicate equipment

The Head of Business Support Services (HBSS) joined the call to discuss the above paper. HBSS provided an update on costs incurred to date to supply specialist equipment for staff to work in the office and additional costs which are likely to be incurred as staff return to the offices which includes agile/blended working patterns.

HBSS advised that their team are currently doing an audit of the offices to confirm what equipment will be required for staff to return to the offices (Specifically replacing standard chairs which were sent to staff working from home) and is working with the central procurement team to ensure we are getting the best value for money.

HMAP also recommended that a suitable solution (rucksacks) is found to transport laptops and equipment to the office, due to the new regulations that staff should refrain from leaving items in the workplace.

The committee agreed that COPFS should support staff and supply equipment where required. WAPs should be completed where specialist equipment is required (For home or office), and normal equipment can be requested through line managers where staff are working from home. This was on the agreement that all equipment is returned to COPFS when staff leave.

Estates – Ballater Street update

HoBMLC provided a summary of the paper and the options currently available for the office. HoBMLC highlighted that timings are important for the changes in Ballater Street and all staff are onboard and excited about the plan. With staff coming back to work and the introduction of agile working patterns, it was recommended to pause the changes for 6 months to get a better understanding of the office requirements.

The DCA agreed to the pause, provided the costs could be absorbed into future budgets.

All other Committee members were in agreement to the 6 month pause to ensure the office refurbishment is completed to meet the future need of the business.

The DoFP asked if the funds allocated to this project could be reallocated to Court Recovery. The Committee agreed to this proposal.

Function Procurement Report

HoBMLC ran through the Function procurement report and highlighted the hard work and savings made by the Procurement Team, who have generated a total saving of just over £1.1M to date

Corporate Risk Register

[ACTION] The DCE advised that there would be a meeting to discuss the Corporate Risk Register the week after this meeting. The DCE would make any adjustments and circulate the Risk Register before the next RC meeting.

Any other Business

The DCA reminded the Committee that answers were still required for answers posed earlier in this meeting. The Committee agreed to use the Court Recovery budget without the FTE adjustments for Local Court, that the funds set aside for the Ballater Street refurbishment should be returned to the central court recovery fund, and a different vacancy factor should be used for each business area.

HMAP advised that the QLTR accounts got final audit clearance the day before this meeting and will be presented to ARC to be signed by the end of the month.

Date of the next meeting: 31 August 2021